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By ELDREDGE J. SMITH.
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MAUDIE'S LETTER.



T WAS the night before Christmas, and because
The children were crazy to greet Santa Claus,
That homes were lighted so bright, you might say
The gloom of the night had been driven away.
And all of the children, whose loving mama
Had told them that "Santa was big as papa,"
Went to bed and to sleep, assured in the night
Of his bringing them presents before it was light.

BUT many poor children each bright Christmas day
Never heard of Santa Claus, I am sorry to say;
Like a poor little girl, who lived in a house
Too small, you would think, to hold even a mouse.
Her mother was sick and lay on the bed ;
Bennie, her brother, cried: "Dive me tome bread
Dear Maudie, I's so told," while his eyes
Filled with the diamonds that fall from the skies.

"Oh dear!" said Maudie, to herself, with a sigh;
"Is Jesus sorry, I wonder, to hear brother cry ?
Suppose I should ask him to give us some bread,
And coal for the fire,—would he hear what I said ?
I hope it is true, that God answers prayer,
But if He's way off in heaven up there,
I feel very sure that he never could hear,
Unless he would let me get up to him near."



“I SUPPOSE I’m too little to pray as I ought ”
(Then Maudie was silent awhile in deep thought)
“ I can’t pray *good*, so perhaps I’d better
Tell Jesus what we’er wanting, in a letter.

With a small bit of paper, and stubby old pen
She commenced : “ Dear Jesus, I’m little, but then
You love little children, I hear people say,
That’s why I write you this letter to-day.
I’m such a little bit of a girl, don’t you see ;
And dear brother Bennie ain’t half big as me ;
And that is the reason that sometimes I fear
That God might forget we ever were here.
There’s no one to love us but mama,—for oh!
Papa went to heaven a long time ago ;
And now do’nt you think, since he went away,
That Santa Clause never comes over this way ;
And when Christmas comes, he nevermore brings
What other children get,—the *beautifullest* things.”



66 **D**EAR mama is sick,—do you think she will die?
Why, even to think of it now, makes me cry;
If mama should go where papa has gone,
How could Bennie and I stay here all alone?

My teacher has taught me, and I think it is true
That you know everything; so I leave it with you
To send us dear Jesus, *just what you think best.*
Give my love to dear papa, and all of the rest—
I mean all the angels, and dear children too,
Who are happy in heaven a-staying with you.
I'll go there some day, for indeed I shall try
To be a good girl. Dear Jesus good bye."

Then she folded the letter, while a few gentle sighs
Were drying the tears that fell from her eyes.

66 **N**OW how shall I address it," she said to herself;
(This was a puzzle for the sweet little elf.)

"Can any one tell me the very best way,
So that Jesus would get it without any delay?"
At last she wrote: "Christ Jesus;" what next?
The more she thought, the more perplexed.
"*The Kingdom of Heaven*" at last she wrote it
And added, "*Boston, Massachusetts.*"

A good pastor lived, some one informed her
Near a "little church around the corner."
Then, with flashing eyes and flowing locks,
She ran and put it in his letter box;
Because she wanted the letter, you know,
To get to Jesus, quick as it could go.

The pastor wondered, you safely can guess,
On receiving the note with such an address;
But he said to himself: "Surely I had better
Be an instrument now, and answer the letter."

FOUR horses it took, and a very large sleigh,
To carry the presents to Maudie that day.
They had plenty to eat now, nice clothes for all,
Books for Bennie,—for mama a shawl;
Indeed they could think of hardly a thing,
That Jesus did'nt make old Santa Claus bring.
Maudie, delighted, was heard to declare,
“ That Santa Claus was surely a big millionaire;
That Jesus *did* listen to children who pray,
And told Mister Santa, to call 'round this way.”
Then Bennie spoke up the best that he could:
“ I loves Desus now, betaus He id dood.”
(Just what you'd expect from one of his years,
With mouth full of taffy, and eyes full of tears.)

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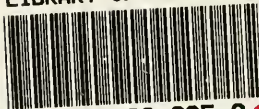
THE forces which hurled yon stars into light ;—
The glory we see flaming up in the night ;
And the power uniting is love undefiled,
Which findeth its home in the heart of a child.
Oh ! ye who are weary with earth and its care ;
Whose hearts are now burdened with all they can bear ;
Tossed by the tempest and torn by its strife,
The faith of a child is the secret of life.
The smile of the skeptic may darken to sneers ;
The delver in earth, may voice only jeers ;
But away from our life youths joy is beguiled,
If we laugh at the faith of an innocent child.

ELDRIDGE SMITH.

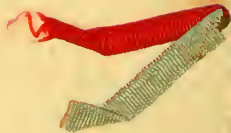




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